



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FEB 27 2007

The Honorable Billy K. Cannaday  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Virginia Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Superintendent Cannaday:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) standards and assessment peer review process under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). I appreciate the efforts required to prepare for the peer review. As you know, with the implementation of NCLB's accountability provisions, each school, district, and State is held accountable for making adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards having all students proficient by 2013-14. An assessment system that produces valid and reliable results is fundamental to a State's accountability system.

I am writing to follow up on the second peer review of Virginia's standards and assessments, which occurred January 24-26, 2007. Based on the recommendations of the peer reviewers and the evidence you have provided to date, the status of Virginia's standards and assessment system is *Approval Expected*. This status indicates that a State will administer an assessment system in grades 3-8 and high school in 2006-07 that the evidence to date suggests is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements. There are certain elements, however, that are not yet complete due to the nature of assessment development.

Virginia must provide the Department with the complete evidence needed to satisfy the remaining requirements, as indicated in the enclosure to this letter, as soon as possible after administering its assessments for the 2006-07 school year. We will contact your staff to work out a timeline. Please note that, because there are elements of Virginia's system that are not yet complete, the condition on Virginia's Title I, Part A grant award will continue until Virginia submits the required evidence and receives full approval of its standards and assessment system.

The Department remains committed to working with Virginia to meet the requirements of NCLB and to raise the performance of all children. Toward that end, let me reiterate my earlier offer of technical assistance to you. If you have any additional questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate

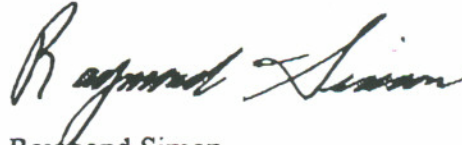
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to call David Harmon ([david.harmon@ed.gov](mailto:david.harmon@ed.gov)) or Abigail Potts ([abigail.potts@ed.gov](mailto:abigail.potts@ed.gov)) of my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymond Simon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Raymond" being more prominent than the last name "Simon".

Raymond Simon  
Deputy Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Governor Tim Kaine  
State Board of Education President Mark Emblidge  
Shelley Loving-Ryder  
Robert Triscari

## **SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT VIRGINIA MUST SUBMIT TO MEET ESEA REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VIRGINIA ASSESSMENT SYSTEM**

### **3.0 – FULL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM**

1. Comparability of the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) “substitute” high school tests and the matched end-of-course tests.

### **4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY**

1. Subgroup (students with disabilities and English language learners) reliability and overall validity for the reading and mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL) tests at grades 4, 6, and 7.
2. Additional documentation for the validity of the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) and the Virginia Grade Level Alternate (VGLA) (i.e., overall and generalized to use with limited English proficient students).
3. Documentation of the demographics of standards-setting panelists for the VAAP.

### **5.0 – ALIGNMENT**

1. Alignment of the AP and IB “substitute” high school tests with academic content standards.